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President Signs 9-11 Reform Bill

Hoekstra: 'Bill Will Begin the Process of Implementing Reforms Necessary to Improve National Security'

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra (R-MI), Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, today issued the following statement upon the president signing the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004*.

“On Sept. 11, America was positioned to respond to threats posed by the U.S.S.R., not the type of international terrorism carried out on U.S. soil that day. Despite the severity of the attacks to the U.S. homeland, the plan executed by those 19 hijackers provided only a glimpse of the type of destruction that terrorists wish to inflict upon the United States. We need to remember that terrorists only need to be right once. We need to be right every time.

“The *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* signed today by President Bush is the most revolutionary change in the structure of U.S. intelligence and domestic security since the creation of the CIA after World War II. The creation of a Director of National Intelligence with full budget authority and a national counterterrorism center, as well as improvements to law enforcement, diplomacy, emergency preparedness and border and aviation security, will have significant impacts on homeland defense.

“This historic bill will initiate the process of eliminating stovepipes among U.S. intelligence agencies and transforming them into the coordinated aggressive and agile organization necessary to protect against those who desire to carry out immeasurable harm against us and our interests. Access to timely and accurate intelligence is the most critical weapon in the war on terror.

“The signing of this bill should not portray a false sense of security. It cannot be expected to instantaneously ensure the security of the United States. However, it will serve as a major first step toward implementing the reforms recommended by the 9-11 Commission to make our country safer from the threats of the 21st century.

“I look forward to further strengthening America’s security by addressing terrorist travel, asylum procedures and other U.S. border security laws when the 109th Congress convenes in January.

“The mission of securing America will never be 100 percent complete, but the signing of this bill into law marks a significant achievement in the fight against terror.”